

COMMON SCHOOL ADVOCATE.

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TO SUBSCRIBERS.

This paper has been established for the purpose of promoting Primary Schools in the Southern and Western States. It will be furnished *gratuitously* to all Teachers, male and female. It can be sent by mail to any part of the country for a very trifling postage.

Among many eminent teachers who will furnish articles for this paper, are EDWARD D. MANSFIELD, Professor of Constitutional Law in Cincinnati College and Inspector of Common Schools. LYMAN HARDING, Professor in Cincinnati College and Principal of the Preparatory Department of that Institution; C. L. TELFORD, Professor in Cincinnati College. It is also expected that Professor Calvin E. Stowe will give the assistance of his pen. Professor Stowe has recently returned from Europe, where he has spent the last year, and will be able to furnish highly interesting information in regard to the systems of instruction in Prussia, Germany, Switzerland, and other parts of the continent.

The paper will take no part in sectarianism or politics, but the leading object shall be to show the influence and importance of schools—to interest the leading prominent men in their improvement—to make known and excite to proper action, the indifference and apathy of parents—to show the want and necessity of well qualified teachers—to point out the defects in the prevailing systems of instruction, and the evils from bad school government—to suggest remedies for these defects in teaching and government—to recommend proper school books—to describe the wrong structure and location of school-houses, and to suggest plans for their improvement—to prevail on trustees, inspectors and commissioners of schools to be faithful in the performance of their whole duties—and, in a word, to urge, by all proper means, every member of the community to give its earnest co-operation with our Common Schools.

All Letters and Subscriptions should be directed, (post paid) to the "COMMON SCHOOL ADVOCATE," Cincinnati, Ohio.—The publishers will take no Letters from the Post Office upon which the postage has not been paid. This regulation will be strictly observed in all cases.

In selecting matter for this paper, extracts have been freely made from the "Common School Assistant," published in the State of New York, and edited by that untiring friend of Common Schools, J. O. Taylor. Also, from "The Annals of Education," the "School Teachers' Friend" by Dwight; the volumes of the "American Institute of Instruction," and many other valuable works not accessible to most teachers.

NOTICE.—Having made a change in our printer, the future numbers of the "Advocate," will be punctually issued on the first day of each month.

[From American Annals of Education.]

SACRIFICES BY TEACHERS.

Much is said, at the present day, of the want of teachers in this country, and of the unfitness of many of those now employed, for the performance of their duties. They are also represented as being actuated by low and unworthy motives—the love of ease, or emolument; or by a desire to use

the employment merely as a stepping-stone to something of more importance.

Teachers, we acknowledge, are very far from being the perfect men and women that they ought to be. Few, very few, as we have abundant reason for believing, enter the profession, from the mere love of it, or from the pure desire of doing good. And yet such teachers there are. We know a few such. We have known them to make sacrifices for the common school, which are seldom exceeded by men of any other profession.

We knew a man who, having spent some half a dozen winters in teaching district schools, had acquired a high reputation in this department of human labor. But this was wholly unsatisfactory to himself; he felt more and more his deficiencies, and sighed more and more for an opportunity to qualify himself for a station of such high responsibilities as that of directing not only the young 'idea,' but the young mind and heart.

He had hitherto 'taught school' in the winter only; for it was not customary in that part of the country where he resided, to continue a man's school through the summer. He was sometimes even tempted to relinquish teaching altogether, and to engage in mercantile business. Public life had also its charms, and besides being already spoken of as a member of the State Legislature, for his native town, he held several responsible town offices.

But his great desire was to realize his own idea of a good school-master; and one spring, at the conclusion of his winter's school, he formed the resolution of devoting himself to the profession of teaching for life. He had no sooner formed this determination, than he proceeded to put his plan into execution.

There were, however, many serious difficulties. The greatest was to obtain a school permanently. The usual wages of the best male teachers of the largest schools, for about four months of the winter, were only twelve or fifteen dollars a month in addition to board; and of a female, six dollars a month, for four or five months of the summer, with the same additions. This would amount to a yearly expenditure, on the part of the district, of only about ninety dollars. In most districts, the sum expended was less; not more than seventy or eighty dollars. It was scarcely possible, therefore, to hope to find a district ready to pay more than one hundred dollars a year.

Application was made to a large and com-

paratively liberal district for a school, to teach it for one hundred and eighty dollars a year. The offer was unexpected, but so highly gratifying, that an effort was made to get a vote to accept it. The only difficulty was in regard to terms. For eleven months—with a vacation of one month, they were willing to give ninety nine-dollars; and one individual more public spirited than the rest, proffered another dollar; making up the round sum of a hundred dollars. This sum, on reflection, was deemed sufficient, and the school was commenced and continued.

It is often said that men labor according to their pay; and as a general rule, the saying may be true. But though paid at a low rate for teaching a very large and, at first, a disorderly school, the teacher of whom we are speaking is believed to have labored with as much diligence as any teacher of a common school in that vicinity. We might even say more. He devoted himself so exclusively and so earnestly to the school, in thought and deed, by night and by day, that he wore himself out in this single year more than during any five years of his whole life besides. Indeed, he actually lost his health by the effort, and came very near losing his life. Low as school teachers' wages were, and as the price of labor in general was, at that time and in that vicinity, there can be no doubt that he earned, and ought to have received for his year's labor, at least two hundred or two hundred and fifty dollars. His employers even seemed more than half convinced of this; for though they could not get a vote to continue the school another whole year, they gave him eighty dollars for six months of the winter next following.

Nor was it his whole time and strength alone that this teacher devoted to the welfare of his pupils. He actually purchased a small library for their use, and gave them many valuable presents besides; and in these two ways expended no inconsiderable share of his already too limited wages.

During his second term in this school—that of six months—he conceived the plan of obtaining a more liberal education. As his means did not permit a full collegiate course, a shorter one was thought of. It was at length decided that he should study one of the professions; chiefly under the eye of a private tutor; spending only six months at the university. The object was twofold; first, to prepare himself for teaching more successfully; second, to have another employment for life, as a dernier re-

sort; that is, in case of the complete failure of his health in teaching; of which there was, at that time, considerable danger.

The diligent study of a profession three years gave him a fine opportunity for mental discipline and improvement. All this time his heart was set on the business of teaching, rather than on any other employment. And no sooner had he received his 'parchment,' than we found him taking charge of another school.

Here again was a sacrifice. Though qualified, according to the laws of the land, for the pursuit of a profession which was universally regarded as lucrative; though somewhat involved in debt by his course of study; and though pressed by his friends and relatives, to several of whom he was under many obligations, to bury his love of teaching, and be at once more respectable and more useful than he ever could be while thus employed; he did not allow himself to hesitate for one moment to do what he believed to be his duty. It is not, indeed, known that any one urged upon him, directly, the consideration that teaching a district school, as things then were, would never enable him to free himself from debt and support a family; yet it is scarcely possible that such a consideration could have escaped him; and circumstanced as he was, the temptation to yield to it would have been great.

And yet, as we have already said, he did not hesitate. He was burning with zeal to improve the condition of common schools; and his zeal had been increased by the appearance, about this time, of the first volume of the "Journal of Education." He began with the central school in his native town. It was in the spring, and the compensation for a female teacher, in the district where he made application, was usually a dollar and fifty cents a week, or six dollars a month, and board. He applied for the school on the same terms; and though his application occasioned some surprise, it was not rejected.

Having expended a small sum for books and for furniture for the school room, he immediately began his labors. Every thing went on, for a time, quite favorably. Every body wondered, it is true, at the circumstance of a man, with the 'honors of the university' in his pocket, engaging to teach twenty-five or thirty children at six dollars a month, with the privilege of 'begging his bread from door to door,' when he might, as they supposed, just as well be receiving a compensation or salary of a thousand dollars a year. But they knew almost as little of his purposes and plans for the benefit of mankind, and of his resolution to 'spend and be spent' for them, as if he had not been brought up among them. The truth is, that a person of this description is always a stranger, even among his best friends. It is exceedingly rare for Heaven

to raise up more than one person who is willing to be a Christian indeed, and to make truly Christian efforts and sacrifices, in the same neighborhood; and those who are not of the same character with such a man, can no more understand, or even sympathize with him, than if he were of another nation or tongue.

But our teacher pursued his course unmo-
lested; which, considering his many peculiarities and innovations, was more than could have been predicted. In the families where he boarded, he was in the highest sense of the term, a missionary; imparting information and encouraging enquiry, and endeavoring to elevate, every where, the parental estimates of the importance of common schools. Some, notwithstanding the general stupidity, were, as the consequence of his efforts, awaking; and he was already beginning to look forward in the hope of reaping the reward of his labors, in the entire reformation of the schools of his native town.

Here, in the midst of his career, his health failed. He was obliged to leave his employment and resort to one better adapted to promote health. With the advice of the best physicians, he engaged in the labors of the other profession for which he had qualified himself.

Yet even here, he did not forget his favorite field of reform. Though he could not actually teach, he encouraged teachers. He threw open his doors and invited them all, of both sexes, at set times and at all times, to come to his room. He loaned them books, visited their schools, both privately and officially; spent much time in conversing with them; and encouraged, every where, the introduction of a new spirit, new methods, and new school books. So that even while ardently engaged in another laborious profession, he was silently working a reform in a very different department.

At the end of two or three years, he found his health restored, with a prospect of its continuance. The question now arose in his mind, whether he should remain where he was, or return to teaching. Friends, whom he consulted, advised the former. He had just become established, they argued, in a useful profession; and there was scarcely an individual who would be willing, for a moment, that he should leave them, especially to engage again in school teaching. Above all, how could he, they seemed to say, so demean himself? How could he think of it, for a single moment?

However, his sphere of action was at length relinquished. In one week after he had found a suitable person to supply his place professionally, he was found engaged in a district school, and instead of receiving the 'thousand dollars a year,' accepting of fifteen dollars a month and his board; which was, as usual, among the families. This

school was now for some time the scene of his sacrifices and missionary labors.

Many years have elapsed since his return to teaching, during the whole of which time he has been laboring, in one form or another, for the cause of education, and particularly for the benefit of district schools, with scarcely a sufficient compensation to procure his daily bread; yet, as he assures us, he has never to this hour regretted—no, not for a single moment—his labors and sacrifices. On the contrary, he rejoices in them, and thanks his Heavenly Father for placing in his power the means of making them. Employments of a more lucrative kind have frequently offered, but a sense of duty has hitherto prevented his engaging in them. He has chosen poverty and self-sacrifice as his portion for life, rather than to relinquish what he deems the cause of God and his country.

We might have related other anecdotes besides the foregoing. We might have spoken of his engaging as a teacher, at ten dollars a month, and *board himself*; of his gratuitous purchases of books for his pupils, of gratuitous evening schools, &c. Enough has been said, however, to show that there are opportunities for teachers to make self-sacrifices; and that there are those in the world who are ready and willing 'to be offered.'

[From American Annals of Education.]

DISTRICT SCHOOL MISSIONARIES.

In the number of Parley's Magazine for September last, we find an article entitled Children's Friends, of which the following is an extract.—The person alluded to is Theodore Dwight, Jr. of New York.

'One of our correspondents, who spends the greater part of his time in doing good, has lately written us a long letter, and told us about some experiments he is making among children. He is in the daily habit of going into the schools of his neighborhood, the Sunday Schools, Week-day Schools and Infant Schools; and, with the permission of the teachers, instructing the children. Sometimes he teaches them to sing, at others, he converses with them, and asks them questions on other subjects. Natural history, in all its branches—geology, mineralogy, botany, and zoology—he is very fond of; and sometimes he teaches them about the human body, or, as it is called, anatomy and physiology. In a letter of his, lately received, after saying that he was instructing, in the ways above mentioned, no less than 800 or 1000 children, he remarks as follows.

"I wish we had a few thousand experiments now making in all parts of our country. One person, male or female, who would step out in each village as the *Children's Friend*, might do a good deal of good by spending for them two or three hours a week. My Saturday afternoon singing meet-

ings are interesting, being sometimes connected with a walk, and always intermingled with snatches of instruction in natural history, morals, religion, life, manners, &c. Will you ask your readers, in all your publications, to begin at once, experiments of this kind? I should be very glad to have them send the results to me, as Corresponding Secretary of the American Lyceum."

We wish, too, most heartily, that a few thousand of these experiments—charities we would call them, rather—were at this moment going on, in all parts of our country. Is there not one person, male or female, to every school district, who might find the time—and who is qualified—to step out, and by spending two or three hours a week in the school, nobly stand forth as a *Children's Friend*?—We have spoken of *qualifications* for this charitable work; but we regard a love of doing good, and especially of doing it to children, as the principal qualification. Find but an individual who sees the condition of district schools to be as it truly is, and loves the souls of his fellow men, especially the young, and if he can possibly spare the time, he need not hesitate on account of any other qualifications. He cannot fail to do good.

His mere presence in the school room will do good. Children are apt to be interested in that which interests their adult parents and friends, and what does not appear to interest the latter, is not apt long to interest the former. There are hundreds and thousands of primary and district schools in the United States, into which no parent or friend, no, nor even any stranger—except, perchance, the visiting committee—ever enters from one year's end to another. The presence, therefore, of one individual of the district among them, daily or even weekly, will afford them some encouragement.

But he can do more than encourage the teacher and pupils by his presence. He can give them now and then an encouraging word. Even his looks may do them good. How many a time, has the kind look, attended by a kind word, urged the tardy youth up the hill side of improvement?

He can do good by conversing occasionally with the teacher. There is often no sympathy, nor any intercourse, between the proprietors of a public school and him whom they have selected to stand in their places six or eight hours a day, and give instruction by his example, and by his precepts and lessons, to the immortal minds of their children. These things, indeed, ought not so to be. But since they are so, it is a mercy, as well as a great public charity, in a benevolent person—known more or less to the pupils, as he must be, if he resides in the same school district—to step in, and not only see and converse with the pupils, but suggest valuable hints to the teacher.

But this is not all that can be done. A thinking person will be able to give a lesson

now and then, as was done by the gentleman mentioned in Parley's Magazine. If he cannot instruct in music, geology, mineralogy, zoology, anatomy or physiology, he can do so in something. Let him relate a story, or anecdote of some place or object he has seen, or let him give an account of some book he has recently read. Or, if nothing more, let him get the teacher's permission to read a selection from the newspaper, throwing in an occasional remark.

We have alluded, in the last instance, to the necessity of the teacher's permission. It is indispensable in all cases to have this. Indeed, most teachers rejoice in such aid and assistance; but if there are any who do not, it is easy to discontinue our visits, and call on those who do.

It is impossible for those who have never made experiments of this kind to conceive of their value. We talk of the benevolent enterprises of the day, but we scarcely know of any which are more important than those we are describing. We talk about giving money, by dollars and by thousands; but time spent in doing good is worth more than money. We talk of the heathen of distant countries, and we do well. Benevolence in every form, giving money where we can give nothing better—missionary labors in China or New Holland even—all are good, very good. But time, and advice, and effort in behalf of the common schools are far better. We envy not the philanthropy of him who sees, any where on the earth's surface, a more important missionary field than the district school.

Nor does it require very good learning, or effort, or sacrifice, to do good in these schools. It is true, that ministers, and physicians, and lawyers, and other learned men,—especially those who have had the charge of families and schools of their own—if they really have their hearts engaged in the work, may do more than some other people. But there are few who cannot do something. In schools which are conducted solely by females, how welcome would the presence, and encouragement, and suggestions, and occasional lessons of a philanthropic female friend, in the neighborhood, often be? Are there no such philanthropic females? Are there not some in every district? There are certainly some who might find leisure. And would not their leisure hours be as well filled up in these efforts, as in bestowing extra attention upon their persons or their dress; or in reading novels; or in going to theatres or balls; or in sighing over distant and sometimes half imaginary evils, which they cannot remove? It is due to the female sex to say, that their sympathies are more easily roused in behalf of those who are enveloped in ignorance and superstition, or who are suffering in their bodies or their minds, than those of our own sex. Shall it be said that these sympathies are easily roused to remove ignorance, and

vice, and suffering, at a distance, but not that which is near their own doors.

If ever there was a time since the world began, when missionaries were needed—holy, self-denying men and women—it is the present. If ever there was a wide or important field for missionary operations, it is the family, and the district school. If ever good could be done in both departments of this great field, not by money so much as by time and influence, it is also the present. It is so because the family and school are almost every where, and by every body, overlooked. It is so because many despise and slander them, and say all manner of evil against them; and if they can get money enough in any kind of business which is called respectable, (even though it were founded on fraud) will take their children out of these nurseries of vice, as they call the common schools, and send them to private schools, and suffer the former, instead of their laboring to make them, as is their Christian duty, nurseries of virtue, to run down, and become a thousand times worse than they were before. Lastly, now is a favorable time for missionary efforts of the kind we have mentioned, because there is a tide of good words just now setting in favor of efforts of this kind. There is a great deal beginning to be said in the community of the importance of taking the teachers of our children by the hand, and recognizing them as our equals, our friends, our most worthy associates, visiting them, inviting them to visit us, &c. Let us show forth, then, by actions as well as by words, that we regard teachers not only as human beings, but as friends, and brethren, and benefactors; and let us make the school room, next to the parlor, the pleasantest, happiest, most profitable place for our children.

But the efforts of Dr. Dwight are not the only missionary efforts which have been made among us in behalf of common and primary schools. We know of several others; and we trust there are many of which we do not know. We hope Mr. Dwight has received accounts of this kind in great numbers. We wish, most heartily, that he and others, who possess facts of the description, would transmit them for insertion in the *Annals of Education*.

It is now nearly twelve years since we, ourselves, have been more or less in the habit of making these experiments. We have always found both teachers and pupils glad to receive us; and apparently encouraged and benefited by our conversations and lessons. We often revert to these missionary efforts—insignificant or trifling as the public are apt to regard them—with very great pleasure; accompanied, however, with feelings of deep regret, that circumstances do not give us more leisure to prosecute them.

We have been most successful in conversing with teachers and pupils on subjects

connected with physiology and the laws of health. We have invited teachers to our room, and have found them, in many cases, glad to accept the invitation. But we have been most frequently in the habit of giving daily lessons to pupils, at the school room, on the hand, the eye, the ear, the hair, the teeth, the nails, the skin, the stomach, &c. We have seldom found any difficulty of sustaining their attention to these subjects quite as long as was profitable, for one time. We have done enough, at least, to satisfy us of the practicability, no less than the importance of the efforts for which we plead. We beg those who have the time and the means, to make similar experiments. There are those among us, of both sexes—we repeat it—who have abundance of leisure for the purpose, and who, had they the necessary faith in this form of doing good, are not wanting in benevolence.

[From American Annals of Education.]

CONFESSION OF A SCHOOLMASTER.

EARLY in autumn, I was invited to take charge of a school, at a considerable distance from my former sphere of labor. What report, with her thousand tongues, had testified of me, I never knew. I only learned that they wanted a 'smart master,' and therefore came for me. The school, for several years had been taught, in the winter, by easy, good-natured, but rather inefficient men; and they wanted somebody of a different character.

They proposed to employ me for four months, at twelve dollars a month and my board. I believe I have already told you it was customary in that region, with few exceptions, for teachers to go from house to house, and board in the families. I had done so the previous winter.—The price offered me was so tempting, and the call so urgent, that I accepted it.

I had just begun to feel my ignorance, and to perceive the responsibility of a schoolmaster. I will not say that I regarded these responsibilities as I ought to have done; for I doubt, almost, if this were possible. Eternity alone, it seems to me now, can set this matter in its true light. But I felt them to such a degree as to give me much anxiety. How should I govern? How should I begin? How should I succeed?—were questions that sometimes rested with great weight on my mind. I have lain awake nearly the whole of the first night, on opening my school, and sometimes several of the succeeding ones, studying what to do, and how to manage.

One thing I had learned during the two preceding winters; which was not to lay down a code of rules or laws for my pupils before circumstances seemed to call for them. If you form your set of laws in the first place, it is *taking the pupils to be bad*, which always seems to have an unhappy tendency. It is the same thing, or at least

has the same effect as to express a want of confidence in them, or a want of respect for their characters. And in proportion as they discover a want of respect for them, they will generally lose respect for themselves. Now nothing is more deeply unfortunate to the young than a want of self-respect. This lost, and all is lost. And any thing which diminishes this is, I say again, of a most unhappy tendency.

My method was to seem to take it for granted, that every one knew what was about right, and meant to govern himself accordingly. If he conducted improperly, I made strange of it, and gently reminded him that he had forgotten himself. This, with most pupils—for indeed it was very nearly the truth—was sufficient. If, however, a considerable number continued to disregard a certain thing, or to repeat, too frequently, certain acts which I conceived were unfavorable to good order, and subversive of just principles, I then made a law against them.

Such a law, to be good for any thing, must have a penalty annexed to it. This penalty was usually mild, but was always—unless it were in some most extraordinary case—inflicted. I had found out long before this, that punishments, however light, should be certain. Uncertainty defeats their whole purpose.

This may be the place, too, for observing that I had made some progress in the art of teaching. Not much, I confess—certainly less than I had in the art of governing or managing. Still I had done something. I had learned to pay my whole attention to a class while it was reading, unless, indeed, a monitor was, for a time, employed; in which case, I ventured to be absent. But such monitors were very seldom employed; and, in general, if I found it necessary to leave the class, I disbanded it. In short, I had come to the resolution to avoid doing more than one thing at a time.

But the main object of my present article is to relate a curious incident that took place this winter, and which came very near breaking up the school, and destroying my rising reputation as a schoolmaster, forever.

There was, in the school, a certain boy whom, for distinction's sake, I shall call Charles. He was always ready to play tricks when set a going by others; but he was not very artful in getting rid of the punishment due to a fault. Some children, you are aware, have the skill to do things which are wrong, and then shift the blame upon others. I had several of this description, at the time of which I am now speaking. They were even willing to unite in roguery, in order to enlist Charles; and generally skilful enough to escape censure, and involve Charles in trouble. Of this trait in their character, I was, however, at first utterly ignorant. Instead of regarding them as the ringleaders—the seducers—

and Charles as only an accomplice, I thought Charles was himself the ringleader; and at length I began to watch and warn him. And according to the principles I have elsewhere advocated, the more he saw himself suspected, watched, and doubted, the worse he became.

At last I began to threaten him with punishment. The results of these threats, any one who had a thorough knowledge of human nature might have foreseen. The boy grew worse and worse, every day. The time finally arrived when, in my judgment, it became necessary to punish him.

Near the school house was a large alder swamp. A boy was sent to this swamp to cut whips. I think his orders were to get and bring in three. The whips came. The boy looked affrighted. The other scholars looked at each other, and at me. One young man, of riper judgment than most of the pupils, hung his head. I now suppose that, knowing the character of Charles, he had doubts whether I was pursuing the right course.

The school room was rather small, as is the New England fashion; not more, I think, than fifteen or sixteen feet square. In order to make room for my operations, as well as to strike the boy and the beholders with terror, I ordered all the inside movable benches to be crowded as near the backside of the room as possible, took off my coat, directed Charles to rise, and begged my scholars to get as far as they could from the whip. Half frightened to death, the younger of them crowded into the corners of the room, while the larger ones, more fearless, sat still and looked on.

Long and eloquently did I represent to the poor boy the nature and enormity of his transgressions, and the justice of his punishment. His crime, I said, was obstinacy; and I thought so. The boy evinced no deep sense of guilt, and I concluded at length to discontinue my speech, and commence blows.

It happened that the rod which was used was rather dry. I made a parade of laying on very heavy blows, to put the school in awe. They were not so very heavy after all. But the stick was so dry, it soon broke in pieces. One of its brittle parts flew against the cheek of a boy who was standing near the fire, and slightly broke the skin. The delinquent was punished with some degree of severity, but there was nothing very remarkable about it.

After this was over, he seemed to behave better; as well as the whole school. There was not half the noise, and disquiet, and play that there had been, or else I imagined it so. In fact, I thought I could perceive the good influence of the chastisement for weeks, if not for months afterward.

However, about a month or six weeks—I have forgotten which—afterward, I heard a most singular story, abroad. Why I had

not heard of it sooner, I cannot and could not then conceive; nor do I now recollect any better how it was divulged in the end. It was substantially as follows.

The master of the boy whose cheek had been wounded by the piece of whip, and whom I call Col. K., being very passionate, no sooner saw the cheek and heard the story, with all those exaggerations to which the boy's fright would be likely to lead him, was at once full of wrath and fury. He took his horse and sallied forth. To see me, do you ask? To see the committee? To see any of the rest of the pupils, to find whether their stories confirmed that which he had heard? No such thing.

He rode to the village, and entered a complaint against me, to the grand jurors of the town. He represented me as having abused—tyrannically and wickedly—a poor orphan* boy; and as being wholly unfitted—by my ungovernable temper—for continuance in the school. He also told them how long the stripes were to be seen on Charles' back after the punishment.

It is rather to be wondered at, that the grand jurors should take no notice of this complaint, strangers as they were to me. But the gentleman was not able to rouse them. Perhaps they saw what the state of his mind was—for he was so exceedingly angry, that he seemed almost like an insane man—and concluded that the case was not worth attention.

Here the matter ended, or would have ended, but for me. It is true that there were several persons in the district dissatisfied with me, in a greater or less degree. But they knew better than to treat me in the way Col. K. had done; and between their sympathy for me and their indignation towards him, the whole matter was dropped.

For my own part, I was unwilling it should end thus. I went to Col. K. and expressed, at once, a sense of the wrong he had done; and concluded by asking him why he did not come to me at once, as soon as he heard the story. Was it acting the Christian part to go first to others?

"Sir," said he, "I did not go to you first, because I could not have kept my temper. The children said you were in a violent passion, and had whipped the poor, fatherless boy almost to death, and I thought that if so, it was not worth while to go to you at all. Better go to the civil authority at once."

I asked him whether he still approved of such a course of proceeding; and as the stories of children, in cases of the kind, could not be wholly relied on, whether he did not think it better to go first to the teacher, and tell him his grievances—whether, in short, if he were the teacher, he would not like to be thus dealt with. Indeed, I pressed him very closely on the subject. It

* Charles was, indeed, an orphan.

is true, I did not fail to concede that there might have been something wrong in the course I had taken; but was this the way to set me right?

He frankly acknowledged, at length, that it was not. He said his only apology for the course he had taken was, that he was passionate, and was not sure he should not beat me, if he met me alone, while enraged. But he now saw, he said, that he had done wrong, and was willing to say so publicly.

This was satisfactory; I could not ask more; and though Col. K. had not taken the best method of setting me right, I was quite willing to let the matter rest.

It is strange, that while so many parents and masters are quite ready and willing to acknowledge that they ought to go directly to the teacher, if they suppose they have cause to be dissatisfied with him, and talk the matter over freely, so few will ever do it. They are more likely, nine cases in ten, to go to some other person and complain. My countrymen, these things ought not so to be!

One word more in regard to my school. All went on well after this, for nearly the whole winter. There was no disturbance, no disobedience; all was quiet and orderly, as if nothing had happened. The use of the whip, on Charles, seemed to have accomplished its object completely. And though I cannot say I believe the rod ought to be much used, yet I consider, with Solomon, that to spare it entirely, in the progress of the education of our citizens, and, above all, to proclaim that we will do so, is to spoil them. The rod is one of those things, which should always be ready for use, but seldom or never used; in the manner of physicians with some of their more poisonous medicines.

EXTRACTS FROM THE ADDRESS,

BY WM. SLOCOMB OF MARIETTA, OHIO.

No subject more deeply interests an enlightened and christian community, than that of training the young mind and fitting it to act well its part in society and the world. And surely none involves consequences more momentous. When a few more years have rolled away, we, who are now on the stage of action, shall have passed the period of activity, and will be incapable, by reason of age and mental imbecility, of longer taking any part in the active scenes of life, or shall have "gone to that country from whose bourn no traveller returns." Standing on the verge of time, it is natural for the statesman to look back into the world and inquire, who among the youth are likely to fill with credit the halls of future legislation, and defend their country's rights and sustain her institutions of freedom? The philanthropist inquires, who will aid in carrying forward the great plan of benevolence which lies so near his heart?

And the christian, with still deeper solicitude, longs to see the ranks filled with those, who will break the bread of life to a dying world, and point the soul to God.

Next to parental instruction, our common schools exert an influence lasting in its duration and important in its consequences. The teacher having the direction of the young mind when it is pliant and flexible, can give to it almost any direction which he chooses. But few, I apprehend, are aware of the amount of moral power placed under his control. It is a great and dangerous error to suppose, that it is of but little consequence into what hands the young mind is thrown in the incipient stages of education. The leading traits of character are generally formed much earlier than most persons are aware. The same principle which induces a child of eight or ten years of age to disobey the injunctions of his parent or teacher, if carried up to manhood, will lead him to violate the laws of his country and his God, and will generally end in disgrace and ruin. How important then that this influence be directed in a proper channel and be of a salutary character.

I propose, in the brief remarks which I may make on this occasion, to point out, so far as I may be able, some of the defects found in our common schools, as existing in the school-room, in the parent or the teacher, and, as I pass along, glance at various other topics directly or indirectly connected with the subject. And if, in doing this, I have occasion for the frequent use of the personal pronoun of the first person, it will be because I prefer to give facts which have fallen under my own observation, than to theorise from the experience of others.

The first cause which I shall notice as tending greatly to retard improvement, is the imperfection of our school-houses. If it be unsuitable for the purpose for which it is designed, but little improvement may be looked for, under a good teacher even. Most school-rooms in the West are quite too small, and only afford room to stow away the scholars like goods in a ware-room. The consequence is, that those disposed to mischief, have constant opportunities for the purpose, and not only neglect their own studies, but are a constant annoyance to all who are near them. Much inconvenience to the teacher and great loss of time is the inevitable result. The common excuse for building so small is, because those concerned feel that they cannot afford to build larger. It would seem however, that a very limited use of arithmetic should convince them that they cannot afford to build so small. Another radical defect in school-rooms is, that they are not properly lighted. This is an evil so cheaply remedied that it ought not to exist. Another defect in school-rooms is, they cannot be properly warmed; and whatever quantities of fuel are used, portions of the room are always, in cold

weather, quite too uncomfortable to allow the pupils to give that calm attention to their books which is desirable. And all my experience goes to prove, that scholars are more inclined to irregularity when uncomfortably cold than otherwise. A school-room should be kept of as even a temperature as possible, just warm enough to allow all to remain in their proper places—and yet not too warm. A very little experience will convince any teacher that the recitations will be bad, in a room which is kept too warm. It should be quite high, and the windows so constructed as to allow them to drop a little at the top, and one at least on the side opposite the wind should be down, even in the coldest days, thereby allowing the air which has been used, to pass freely off, and be re-placed by that which is pure. Trifling as this remark may appear, it will be found on trial, to be of no small importance. It is moreover, quite desirable that the room be so large as to accommodate all the scholars on three sides of it, in single tiers of seats, all facing inwards. The desks should be firm, and of different heights to accommodate the different ages of the pupils, so as to allow the body, when writing to be nearly erect. But I will not enlarge on this topic.

I will pass on to notice some of the defects in our common schools, which are attributable to the teacher. These may be found in his incapacity to teach the branches which he undertakes; or he may have a good knowledge of the branches taught, but not a faculty to communicate them to others. Not "apt to teach." Or he may have all the requisite knowledge and a happy talent to communicate, but fail in government. Or he may possess in a good degree, all the above qualifications, but make teaching only a secondary concern, and fail of course to be very useful as a teacher. The great scarcity of competent teachers in the West, has rendered it almost or quite necessary to employ such as are not well qualified. And no one can be expected to communicate clearly to others, what he has but crude conceptions of himself. The pupils of such teachers, will, in general, make but very little improvement, and that little, will be very likely to be of a superficial character. The consequence is, when the scholar arrives at, or near, the standard of his teacher, he is, in his own estimation at least, qualified to teach; and thus the evil is perpetuated. I speak advisedly on this subject. I have had some ten or fifteen such teachers in my school at the same time, not one of whom could give the reasons for parsing a simple sentence in English grammar, nor tell the difference between an object of an action and of relation; nor why the tropics and polar circles are placed where they are on the artificial globe. Whether such teachers are, on the whole, of more service than detriment to the community, is a ques-

tion worthy of investigation. However, this may have been in the early settlement of the West, it would seem that the time has arrived, when the qualifications of teachers of our common schools should be raised.

Another defect in our common schools which should be remedied by the teacher is, the want of a proper arrangement of studies. It is often the case that pupils are allowed to make their own selection of studies, to the total neglect of all others; thereby rendering it very difficult, if not impracticable, to make such classification of the school as is indispensable to desirable improvement. Scholars under my instruction, have often requested to be excused from attending to reading, writing, and spelling; and probably the leading motive for such a request, was a wish to conceal their ignorance of those branches of study: because, on examination they were often found quite deficient in them, and would always be likely to remain so, if allowed to pursue their own course. But however painful it may be to the teacher, he should always require attention to the above branches, when, in his opinion, the good of the scholar demands it.

Again, teachers often allow their scholars to abandon a study after having commenced it, and pursued it perhaps for some weeks. This is a serious evil and needs correction. Studies should be selected with care, gratifying the pupil and the parent, as far as it can be done consistently with their interest and that of the school. But when selected, the teacher should never allow them to be abandoned, except for want of a capacity to pursue them. Nor should scholars be encouraged to commence any study, which requires long and close application to be essentially benefited by it, when it is known that their time for attending to it will be quite limited. When young persons are told that they can attain a good knowledge of English grammar for instance, in three, or six months even, they are told that they can do what never was, and, I will venture to add, what never will be done. They may be led to suppose, that when they can parse a simple sentence, they know all that is necessary to be known of that branch of study. They may indeed know as much as their teacher, which, so far as regards the philosophy of the language, is just nothing at all. All is superficial, and all, as a general rule, will be likely to remain so, till teaching is made a profession. But more on this subject before I close.

Again, there may be a fault in the manner in which studies are presented to the young mind. The grand difficulty is, teachers do not think and teach their scholars to think and understand what they learn from books. The mind should be trained to habits of investigation—close, careful, and untiring thought. But all this will be comparatively useless without system. A teacher should have a time for every thing, and then

let every thing be done in its proper time. When twenty things are going on in school at the same time, and the teacher is attempting to attend to all of them, nothing will be likely to be done well. He will be constantly harrassed and vexed, and no marvel at the proverb, "that old school-masters commonly look cross." But let them pursue their vocations systematically, and I can see no reason why they may not look as pleasantly as other people.

But of all the sources of superficial scholars, no one, nor perhaps all combined, has wrought greater mischief than the *patent teachers*, (I call them patent teachers for want of a more appropriate name,) who stroll through the country, leading astray silly scholars and their more silly parents, with the belief, that by attending to some fifteen or twenty lessons, they can become masters of the branches thus taught, and learn in minutes what, in the ordinary way, would take months. Scholars so instructed are usually *profound dunces*, having about as much knowledge of the branches thus attended to, as the parrot has of the English language. Nor is it an easy matter to induce them to attend diligently to any study whatever; for the very plain reason, that they have been taught, that but very little study is necessary to master what they wish to learn, when properly communicated. The old method of rowing and poling will not do. They must go by steam. And could any one invent an engine that would act on the brain, and push the mental faculties at some ten-fold the ordinary rate, no doubt he would make his fortune. Till that is done, I suppose the mind must jog along much in the old fashioned way. I am happy however to add, that teachers of the character above alluded to, are becoming scarce in the West, and no doubt will soon have their appropriate place in the estimation of an enlightened public, beside the venders of horn flints and wooden nutmegs.

I said that a teacher might possess all the requisite knowledge, but not have a faculty of communicating it to others. Where there is a deficiency in this respect, he would do well to abandon the business. For it is a qualification without which he can never be useful as a teacher.

Again, a teacher may possess all the requisite knowledge with a happy faculty of communicating it, but fail in government. This too, is a radical defect. Very little improvement will be made in the midst of insubordination and misrule. If a teacher would govern well, he should not have too many rules, and those should be rather general than particular. The teacher who has a special rule for every possible case, may be sure that some of them will be often violated; and much of his time will be employed in bringing offenders to justice. The government of a school is necessarily despotic, and the teacher who is disposed to

act the part of a petty tyrant, is not fit for the station. Government should be firm and dignified, but always even and uniform, and yet mild and conciliating; calculated to show the offender that he is doing injury to himself rather than the teacher. And I am happy in having the opportunity to say, in this public manner, that punishment, in my opinion, should never be resorted to till all other means have failed, and even then, *should never be of a corporeal character*. I am aware that some teachers, whose opinions I highly respect, think that corporeal punishment is in some cases indispensable. But so far as my acquaintance extends, the number is small and fast diminishing. Let me not be misunderstood on this subject. It is not *punishment* that I so much object to, as *corporeal punishment*. But I may be asked, what shall be substituted in place of corporeal punishment in extreme cases? I answer—public sentiment and moral accountability. I have yet to find the scholar who could not be reached by those when judiciously used. Besides, a school is a place where many early habits are fixed, and which will be likely “to grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength” of the pupil. And the precepts and examples of the teacher, exert no small influence in forming these habits. Well, then, let it be the daily practice of the teacher to whip his scholars for a violation of his rules. What will the boy, with such examples before him, be likely to do when he considers his rights encroached on? Surely just what he has seen his teacher do—whip the offender. Show me a school or a family in which the rod is in daily use, and I will show you one where very little respect for the parent or teacher exists; but where insubordination and confusion are, to say the least, generally prominent characteristics. How, then, it may be asked, are our schools to be governed? I answer—let the principles of the Bible be laid at the foundation of the edifice of knowledge; yea, let them be deeply laid, and constantly inculcated, and it will be an edifice which neither time nor revolution can undermine; one on which the teacher may build with pleasure and delight. Without these principles, his foundation is on the sand, and no wonder that he finds the superstructure constantly giving way around him. But to drop the figure.—Let the young minds be taught that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;” to “do to others as they would that others should do unto them;” in short, let the pupil be treated as a rational being, and not as a brute, and the rod will be a useless appendage to aid in government. Without these principles, we expect the teacher will be compelled to resort to other means of restraining the passions; and it is not strange to hear such teachers say, and that boldly and confidently, “that they have tried the experiment, and it has

failed.” It would be strange were it otherwise. But some object to the use of the Bible in school, because they wish to leave the mind free to judge of its principles and precepts in mature years. Far be it from the business of the teacher to make his pupils sectarians of any name. It is its moral influence which we want, and that alone. As well may we keep our children in darkness relative to all our political institutions, and leave the mind free to choose what kind of government it pleases. Perhaps a despotism will be preferred. They will all be likely to be republican if enlightened. All such reasoning is futile.

I will mention one instance more, in which teachers may fail; and that is, by encouraging a spirit of rivalry. A system of rewards may be used to advantage in common schools, but care should be taken that they be not rewards for *talent*, but for *improvement* of talent. The scholar who improves well his *one* talent, should rank with him who improves his *ten*. “Moral excellence should be the standard of merit, rather than talent and acquirement. Rewards based on the foundation of talent or attainment merely, have a tendency to divert the mind from moral excellence. It appeals to the passions and is therefore wrong, and ought to be abandoned.” A late writer says: “We must abandon a system of rewards for mental superiority: we must educate the noblest part of human nature, the moral faculties, educate them upon the principles of God’s word, and abandon every system which infringes upon these principles, or tends to exalt the power of knowledge above moral character. Whenever the motives exhibited in the Bible become the main spring of human action, then, and not till then, will society be purified, free institutions be rendered permanent, and knowledge contributed to the happiness of man.”

But I proceed to notice some of the defects in our common schools, which lie at the door of parents and guardians. And I would first of all say, that a perfect co-operation should exist between the parent and teacher. Where this is wanting, much evil will be the inevitable result.

Irregularity of attendance is an evil of no small magnitude. Many parents make it a mere matter of convenience to send their children or not. If the child is wanted, or manifests a reluctance to go, he is permitted to remain at home, or to enter the school at a late hour, which is even worse. He soon loses all inclination for study, if he ever had any, falls behind his class, becomes discouraged and indifferent, and makes but little or no improvement. After some months perhaps, the parent discovers that his son is not improving, and inquires for the cause. And where, think you, does he find it? In the teacher, to be sure. He neglects his duty, or is partial, and must give place to

one who will do differently; never once dreaming that *he* is the sole cause of all this evil. This is doing teachers great injustice; they are required to make brick without straw; or even worse, to learn children who are not at school, or which is about as bad, who attend irregularly. And allow me to add, that parents have *no right* to keep their children from school, for every trifling cause, when once entered. This may look like encroaching on the rights of parents; but it ought to be remembered that teachers too have rights. What would be thought of the man, who, after engaging a mechanic to do a piece of work, should be in the constant practice of removing some of the materials, indispensable to its completion, and yet complain that his work progressed but slowly? Every one would say that he was unreasonable in his complaints—quite as reasonable however, as the parent who expects his children to improve without regular attendance. I speak the more freely on this subject as my labors as a teacher are finished.

Another highly injurious practice is, that of parents allowing the children to complain of what is done in school. The parent, who allows this practice, will have enough to listen to; for children thus indulged, soon acquire a habit of watching for something to communicate. And a school, being a place, of all others, where perfection is not to be looked for, little incidents will daily occur, which, by a little false coloring, may be made to appear quite wrong. Some rule operates injuriously; or the teacher is partial; or they were not allowed to warm when almost frozen; or some other wonderfully wicked thing was done by him. The parent, in a passion and without inquiry, takes his children from school. And what next? What was done hastily must be justified. The parents, with all their little urchins, set themselves at work to prejudice the minds of the whole neighborhood against the teacher. A torrent of abuse is poured upon the head of perhaps a very worthy man, who, if not driven from his station before the close of the term, retires from it at the end, with disgust. This is no picture of the imagination. Occurrences of this character are not unfrequent in the West. I could point to a large family where this game has been played for many years, in which there is not, nor is there likely to be a well educated child, with every desirable advantage, and at an expense sufficient to have given them all a good English education.—Now all these evils could generally be avoided, if parents, instead of listening to the complaints of their children, would ascertain from the teacher himself, a true statement of facts. Parents are not aware of the mischiefs they are doing by this *ex parte* proceeding, not only to their own children, but to the whole district in which they reside. Allow me to say that no parent can be just,

tified for blaming a teacher, till he has given him an opportunity to explain the cause of his procedure; and even then, should speak with great caution before his children; for when a pupil loses confidence in his teacher, improvement is at an end, and he may as well be at home as at school.

Another evil is, the short time for which scholars are entered in school; generally for one quarter or less; consequently the teacher cannot arrange the studies of his school with the same advantage that he could, did he know that they would be under his tuition for a longer period. I have had an opportunity to test the truth of this remark. For the last two years of my teaching, the scholars were all entered by the year; by this arrangement, I had an opportunity of laying out my work for a whole year at once. And the result has convinced me, at least, that the practice of entering scholars by the quarter is a very injudicious one. Six months should be the shortest period.

Again, much evil often results from the interference of parents with the studies of the school. It is often the case, that when the teacher has formed a young class, that he is told by some of the parents that his children are too young to commence that study, or that he cannot afford to purchase the necessary books. Or more common still, after the class has progressed a week or two, some of them become tired of it, and go to the teacher with the information, that their mother has excused them from any further attention to it. In case the teacher suffers himself to be dictated to in this way, many of his pupils will be likely to remain in ignorance, and mischief will be the certain result. Parents ought not to place their children under a teacher in whom they cannot confide the direction of their studies.

But how are we to provide a remedy for all these evils? I apprehend it will never be done till teaching is made a profession, and young men and young women are raised up and qualified expressly for the work of teaching. It has too long been the case that young men have engaged in the business of teaching, merely to sustain themselves while preparing for some other profession. Many of them are, no doubt, well qualified, in point of knowledge, and would do credit to their profession, should they conclude to make teaching their business. But they never can feel the same interest in their schools as the man who has devoted his life to teaching. They generally engage in school as a dernier resort. They are qualified for no mechanical business, for years must be spent to qualify them to form a hat, a coat, or a shoe; but to form the mind, "To rear the tender thought, and teach the young idea how to shoot," requires no further qualification than to be able to read passably well, to write a legible hand, and have a little smattering of Arithmetic. Besides, they calculate to teach only for a short time, and cannot afford to furnish them-

selves with the necessary books and apparatus.

Should teaching be made a profession, the standard of qualifications would be very much raised, and a multitude of *would be teachers* would be thrown out of the market. Gross impositions are often practised by persons offering themselves as teachers, who possess scarcely a requisite qualification. They have been employed because they would teach cheap, and this, with many, is the grand qualification. It is even maintained that the price ought to be low, because the task is so easy "Only think, just to sit and hear the children read, &c. six hours in a day. Surely ten or twelve dollars a month is quite enough." And cheap teachers often encourage this sentiment. One of this class was wonderfully successful, some years ago, in a small town in a neighboring state. He was the best man in all the village. Did not spend his evenings, as some do, in poring over his books, but in taking a *social glass* with his employers. And that it might be known by strangers, which cabin was the seat of literature, he had a sign over his door, "*Edecation teach'd here.*"

The lawyer and the doctor, yea, even the shoemaker and the tinker, are educated for their employment, and why should not the teacher be? The object of elementary education should be to improve the intellectual and moral powers of the being educated. Nor should the physical be neglected. Not merely to store the mind with rules and facts, to produce men as well as scholars. In this way a good foundation may be laid for other improvements in the science. A disposition to lead the mind and not to force it, to guide the efforts of nature, and not restrain and compel them; the substitution of kindness, as far as possible, in place of dread; the abolition of fear and pain, and the introduction of interest and curiosity. In short, teachers should remember that rational beings are under their care.

It is acknowledged, on all hands, that it is more difficult to unlearn than to learn; to correct bad habits than to fix new ones. Why is it then that our first schools are so little regarded? It is an evil, a great evil, and must be remedied. The consideration of this subject is what has called us together on this occasion, and I am happy to see so much interest excited, and hope that before this Convention closes, a new impulse will be given to the cause, which will be felt in the remotest corners of our State. Teachers would very much aid in this enterprise, if they would form Associations of teachers and others friendly to the cause of education, in every county, and send delegates annually to the State Convention. Let these Associations endeavor to interest and enlighten the public on this subject. Let them take hold of the work with their own hands and they will be supported. Let them, by holding public meetings, and circu-

lating suitable publications, impress upon the public mind the importance of raising the standard of common school instruction, and making the station of the teacher what it ought to be, one of *respectability* as well as *responsibility*. So far as my feeble efforts can be of any use, they are at the service of our younger teachers to aid them in this noble enterprise.

To teachers, I would say in the language of President Wayland, "You have chosen a noble profession. What though it lead not to the falsely named *heights* of political eminence? It leads to what is far better, the source of real power. It is a thought to wake up and fill with enthusiasm, any mind however torpid. You, unknown and unhonored as you be, are every one of you exerting an influence, which you cannot see nor measure, but which will exist upon the progress of the world, the spread of truth, and the happiness of millions of your fellow men. Unto you it is given to fashion the clay which came soft and susceptible from the hand of God. To you, it is given, to lay the foundation of many a moral edifice; and as you labor, faithfully or not, so will that building stand unshaken amid the storm, or totter and fall in the first breathing of the tempest. We talk of the power of the political ruler; but his power is, in truth, weak compared with yours, or if not weak, it is, in general, worthless."

Attention to this subject is much needed in the West. When the country was new, the necessity of education was less felt, and the science less cultivated, and teachers less respected perhaps than they are even now. But the time has arrived, when the standard of excellence ought to be raised. If teachers will lay aside all jealousy, and co-operate for the good of the cause in which they are engaged, they will find their reward. They will find many ready to second their efforts, and render their task, more easy and more pleasant. The duty of parental co-operation, must be so presented to the mind, that it will be understood and felt. Parents must feel that they too are teachers, and that too, at an age when the mind is the most susceptible of impressions, and when the first stamp is put upon it.

Many a man has been arrested upon the very threshold of crime, by the remembrance of the principles instilled into his mind by his parent or teacher in early childhood. And before taking the fatal step he has paused—

"And when he lifts his hand to strike the blow,
She that did nurse him, helpless, on her breast,
And lulled his little being into rest—
His mother, stands between him and his foe.
And can he smite him? no, the palsied hand
Falls to his side; and on the wings of thought,
He is borne backward to his native land,
And to the homely hearth, where he was taught
to worship God."